Sub E1> a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stochiometric or rich; and

C1

control means for making the air-fuel ratio in said catalytic apparatus rich to release NO_x therefrom and to purify the released NO_x by reduction.

Sub. E1>

2. (Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, said catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stochiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stochiometric or rich; and

C2

bypassing means to make possible the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter downstream said catalytic apparatus.

3. (Twice Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein during the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means makes the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter.

4. (Twice Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein immediately after the finishing of the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means does

not make the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter and thus the exhaust gas passes through said particulate filter.

5. (Three Times Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries an oxidation catalyst;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stochiometric or rich; and

control means for making the air-fuel ratio in said catalytic apparatus rich to release NO_x therefrom and to purify the released NO_x by reduction.

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending herein. By the previous Office Action, claims 3-4 were allowed; claim 2 was objected to; and claims 1 and 5-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). By this Amendment, claims 7-8 are canceled and claims 1-5 are amended. No new matter is added.

The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 3-4 are allowed and claim 2 is objected to only for being dependent upon a rejected base claim. For the reasons set forth below, all of claims 1-6 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

The previous Office Action rejects claims 1 and 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Araki (Japanese Publication No. 8-338229) ("JP 229"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.